(c) It has always been the policy of Government to safeguard the interest of the small scale industry, including textile industry. For this purpose a number of measures such as reservation of items for exclusive manufacture in the SSI sector, fiscal concession in the form of excise relief, priority sector lending to SSI, Infrastructure Development Scheme, Enhanced Technology support for modernisation and quality upgradation, enhancement of Entrepreneurship Development Programme by involving voluntary agencies and strengthening extrepreneurship development institutes, enhancing the limit of composite loans, enlarging the coverage of TDMF Scheme have been taken for promotion of small scale industries.

Modernisation of Pondicherry Textile Corporation

752. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any provision has been made by Government to modernise the Pondicherry Textile Corporation in the Union Territory of Pondicherry;

(b) if so, the amount sanctioned to the mill;

(c) whether it is a fact that the mill is sustaining huge loan every year;

(d) if so, the loan sanctioned every year since 1996 to 1997 yearwise; and

(e) what steps have been taken to minimise the loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (e) The Pondicherry Textile Corporation, Pondicherry is a Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of Pondicherry. It was taken over by the Government of Pondicherry under the Anglo-French Textiles Limited (Acquisition & Transfer of Textile Undertaking) Act, 1986. Since then, it is being managed by the Government of Pondicherry. Therefore, efficient and smooth running of the mill including its modernisation and minimisation of losses etc. come within the purview of the Government of Pondicherry. However, Government of India have launched a Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) for textile and jute industries, which is in operation since 1st April, 1999 for a period of 5 years. This is not specific to any particular mill, including the units of the Pondicherry Textile Corporation. Any eligible textile/jute unit can avail of funds within the frame

work of the scheme and normal financial norms of the concerned financial institution/Bank.

Cotton Production

753. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken by Government to increase cotton production in the country;

(b) the target set and actual production of cotton in last three years;

(c) the target set for 1999-2000 and measures proposed to be adopted to increase cotton production in Ninth Plan; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) To increase cotton production in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Intensive Cotton Development Programme is being implemented in various cotton growing States. Under the scheme, assistance is provided for the transfer of production technology through field demonstration and farmers training and supply of critical inputs such as seeds, sprayers, sprinklers, bio-agents etc. Further, to increase the productivity and quality of cotton, the Government has launched a Technology Mission on Cotton Development, from the current financial year, with objectives of research, dissemination of technology to farmers, improvement in marketing infrastructure and modernisation of Ginning & Pressing Factories. The production of cotton during the last three years and the estimated production for the current cotton year 1999-2000 are as under:

Year (Oct.-Sept.)	Production (In lakh bales of 170 kg. each)
1996-97	177.90
1997-98	158
1998-99	163
1999-2000	175*

*As estimated by the Cotton Advisory Board in its meeting held on 19.11.1999.